

4.13 SOCIOECONOMICS

This section describes existing socioeconomic conditions and potential Project-related impacts on population, employment, housing, services and utilities, and local tax revenue.

4.13.1 Environmental Setting

The proposed Project would traverse primarily rural desert areas in Kern, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties in southeastern California. The study area for socioeconomic and public service impacts includes these three counties; the incorporated cities of Bakersfield, Mojave, Barstow, and Blythe; and the towns of Boron, Hinkley, Yermo, Ludlow, Amboy, Cadiz, Chubbuck, Rice, and Midfield. The pipeline also enters the town of Ehrenburg, Arizona, which is located in La Paz County across the Colorado River from Blythe.

Housing

Temporary housing availability varies geographically within the communities along the pipeline route. Vacancy rates in the three counties are provided in Table 4.13-1.

Temporary housing is available in the form of daily, weekly, and monthly rentals in motels, hotels, campgrounds, and rooming houses. Areas likely to have adequate hotel/motel space in the three counties include the cities of Bakersfield, Barstow, Mojave, and Blythe.

Table 4.13-1. Vacancy Rates in California Counties Traversed by the Pipeline

County	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate (%)
Kern	231,564	5,738	2.5
San Bernardino	601,369	31,632	5.3
Riverside	584,674	38,241	6.5

Table 4.13-2 provides temporary accommodation availability in the construction area.

Table 4.13-2 Temporary Accommodations Available

Community	Hotel/Motel Rooms	Camp/RV Sites	Total
Bakersfield	3034	778	3812
Blythe	482	412	894
Boron	35	35	70
Mojave	360	100	460
Newberry Springs	NA	63	63
Shafer	NA	75	75
Tehachapi	200	74	274
Victoville	850	136	986
Yermo	78	78	156
TOTAL	5039	1751	6790

Sources: DeLorme, 2003. Southern & Central California Atlas & Gazetteer and calls to area hotels/motels.

Public Services

Public services such as police, fire, and emergency medical services would be provided by the following jurisdictions: Kern County, San Bernardino County, Riverside County, the California Division of Forestry, the City of Bakersfield, the City of Barstow, and the City of Blythe. The more rural locations of the Project area would be serviced by county and state police and fire agencies. In Kern County, fire and emergency medical services would be available from Kern County Fire Department, Battalion 1 and Battalion 2. Law enforcement services would be available from the Kern County Sheriff's Department, which has substations in the towns of Lamonte, Boron, and Mojave. Fire and emergency medical services in San Bernardino County are provided by the San Bernardino County Fire Department, North Desert Division and South Desert Division. Law enforcement services are provided by the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department, with a substation in the City of Barstow. The City of Barstow provides police services within the city limits. Fire and emergency medical services for Riverside County are provided by Riverside County Fire Department and California Division of Forestry from substations at the Blythe Air Base. Fire and emergency medical services within the city limits of Blythe are provided by a part-time volunteer fire department. Police services for Riverside County are provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, with a substation in the City of Blythe. The City of Blythe provides police services within its city limits. In Arizona, fire and emergency medical services would be provided by a part-time volunteer fire department in the town of Ehrenberg. Police services would be available from La Paz County Sheriff's Department.

Population and Economics

Table 4.13-3 provides a summary of demographic and socioeconomic data for Kern, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. The three California counties have seen marked growth from 1990 to 2000. La Paz County, Arizona has grown at an even faster rate than the California counties. This growth has been primarily in the existing urban areas of each county, while the proposed Project traverses the more rural sections of all three counties.

Table 4.13-3. Demographic Data

County	Population	Minority Population (%)	Population Trend (%)	Per Capita Income	Unemployment Rate (%)	Employment by Industry
Kern	661,645	38.4	21.7	\$15,760	6.7	Agriculture Retail service
San Bernardino	1,709,434	41.1	20.5	\$16,856	4.9	Manufacturing Retail service
Riverside	1,545,387	34.4	32.0	\$18,689	4.4	Manufacturing Retail service

Per capita income in all three California counties and La Paz County is below the Federal average, with La Paz County being the lowest. The number of families near or below the poverty line in the study area is slightly higher than the Federal average, with Kern County having the highest percentage. The workforce in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties consists of primarily government/social services, retail, and manufacturing; Kern County has a large percentage of jobs in the agricultural industry. In La Paz County, the employment sector with the highest percentage of workers is the art/recreation industry, followed by education and retail.

4.13.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Under NEPA, the definition of “human environment” states that economic or social effects are not intended, by themselves, to require preparation of an EIR or EA. However, when an EIR or EA is prepared, the economic and social effects must be discussed if they are interrelated to the natural or physical environmental effects.

State

Under CEQA, economic and social changes resulting from a project are not treated as significant effects on the environment. Effects analyzed in an EIR must be related to a physical change in the environment. However, economic or social changes may be used to determine that a physical change is significant. Additionally, if a physical change in the environment would result in economic and social changes, which in turn have secondary physical effects, those effects may be evaluated in an EIR.

Local

Kern, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties were contacted. There is no local regulatory involvement in a pipeline conversion project related to socioeconomics.

4.13.3 Significance Criteria

An adverse socioeconomic impact was considered significant and would require mitigation if Project construction or operation would:

- cause the vacancy rate for temporary housing to fall to less than 5 percent;
- increase the short- or long-term demand for public services in excess of existing and projected capacities;
- cause a permanent population increase of 3 percent or more in a county affected by the Project;

4.13.4 Impact Analysis and Mitigation

The Project would not induce growth, displace permanent residences or businesses, or cause any permanent population increase. All socioeconomic effects would be temporary and primarily related to the construction phase.

Construction of the Project is expected to require two spreads with 100 to 150 temporary workers per spread. Construction workforce would include both local and non-local workers. When available, local workers would be employed for construction. Additional construction personnel hired from outside the Project area would include construction specialists, supervisory personnel, and inspectors who would temporarily

relocate to the Project area. It is estimated that up to 30 percent of the construction workforce would be local hires, depending on union agreements and the methods the contractor uses to hire subcontractors.

Project area population impacts are expected to be temporary and proportionally small. The total population change would equal the total number of non-local construction workers, plus any family members accompanying them. Given the brief construction period, approximately 4 to 5 months per spread, most non-local workers are not expected to be accompanied by their families. Assuming 20 percent of the 70 to 105 non-local workers per spread bring three other family members with them, the total increase in population along each spread would be between 112 and 168 people. This temporary increase would not result in a significant impact on population in Riverside, San Bernardino and Kern counties.

Construction of the Project could affect the availability of housing in the Project area, however, no significant impacts on local housing markets are expected. Because the construction period along each spread is relatively short, most workers are likely to use temporary housing such as hotels, motels, apartments, and campgrounds within commuting distance of the Project area. As summarized in Table 4.13-2, there is adequate temporary accommodations in the area.

Previous pipeline experience suggests that approximately 30 percent of the non-local workers would provide their own housing units (i.e., travel trailers or RV campers). Given the number of hotel/motel rooms and camp sites available in communities in the vicinity of the Project, construction crews should not encounter difficulty in finding temporary housing. No additional workers would be required for operation or maintenance of the Project. Therefore, there would be no long-term impacts on population and housing.

Public service requirements of the Project are expected to be negligible except in the event of a fire or other emergency during operation of the Project. In the event of an emergency, fire, police, and emergency medical services would be required. These service requirements would be temporary and only in the unlikely event of an accident. Emergency response needed would not be expected to place an increased burden on the public services in the Project area. Expected impacts on public services would be less than significant.

The construction crew foreman would be aware of the public services available at each construction site. They would also maintain contact information for those agencies providing services.

Some short-term benefits to the local community are anticipated from construction (*Class IV impact*). Property, office space, construction trailers and equipment can be leased locally. The local labor force may also benefit from the need for construction laborers. Additionally, local business should benefit from the short-term influx of workers and the need for temporary housing, meals, and retail sales with its accompanying local sales tax.

Because of their scale and duration, impacts on socioeconomic are considered less than significant; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

4.13.5 Cumulative Impacts

While the Project is not anticipated to impact employment, housing, traffic, and public services permanently or over the long term, strains on these resources that could occur during construction activities could be aggravated by the construction of other projects in the area at the same time. Section 5.5, Summary of Cumulative Impacts, describes those projects that may be built close to the proposed Project. The exact timing of construction for most of these projects is unknown but could possibly coincide with the proposed Project. Coinciding construction schedules could increase the number of construction workers needed locally and the number of non-local workers that would need use of temporary housing and public services. These impacts would be temporary in nature, particularly for those portions of the Project directly on Line 1903 that involve relatively small repairs spaced intermittently over the 303.5-mile pipeline. The communities of Bakersfield, Barstow, Mojave, and Blythe have the temporary housing and infrastructure to handle the 150 workers for the proposed Project. Those projects discussed in Section 5.5, Summary of Cumulative Impacts, near the proposed Project would not likely require excessive amounts of workers or local resources and would not likely lead to significant cumulative impacts even if constructed at the same time as the proposed Project.

4.13.6 Alternatives

No Project Alternative

The No Project Alternative would not convert the former All American crude oil pipeline system to a natural gas transmission system. There would be no changes to the existing population or the local economy, no increased demand for public services and no increase in demand for temporary housing.

Ehrenberg to Daggett Alternative

The Ehrenberg to Daggett Alternative would not convert the portion of Line 1903 from MP 0 to MP 132.1. The total time required for construction would be less than that for the Project. There would be less demand for temporary lodging within the Project vicinity.

Ehrenberg to Cadiz Alternative

The Ehrenberg to Cadiz Alternative would not convert the portion of Line 1903 from MP 0 to MP 215.75. The total time required for construction would be less than that for the Project. There would be less demand for temporary lodging within the Project vicinity.

4.13.7 References

City of Bakersfield, California. November 2003. Found at www.ci.bakersfield.ca.us

City of Barstow, California. November 2003. Found at www.ci.barstow.ca.us

City of Blythe, California. November 2003. Found at www.ci.blythe.ca.us

DeLorme, 2003. Southern & Central California Atlas & Gazetteer.

Kern County, California. November 2003. Found at www.co.kern.ca.us

La Paz County, California. November 2003. Found at www.co.la-paz.az.us

Riverside County, California. November 2003. Found at www.co.riverside.ca.us

San Bernardino County, California. November 2003. Found at www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us

US Census Bureau. November 2003. Found at <http://factfinder.census.gov>.